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Articles in Today's Clips

Friday, August 29, 2008

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Mother's ex-boyfriend convicted in baby's death

Friday, August 29, 2008

By John S. Hausman
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MUSKEGON COUNTY -- The families of the victim and of the just-convicted murderer were a study in contrasts.

A Muskegon County jury Thursday afternoon found Marcus Tulenkun Bolden, 23, of 2216 Peck guilty of second-degree unpremeditated murder in the Feb. 1, 2004, death of 1-year-old Houston Curtis from a head injury. The jury deliberated a little more than five hours starting Wednesday, weighing the options of first-degree felony murder, second-degree or acquittal.

After the verdict was announced, Bolden's mother, Glenda Bolden, softly said to her son in court, "I know you been set up."

Then, at increasing volume, she called out, "Don't worry, Marcus, I got you. I have you. I'm gonna take care of you... They lied! All of 'em lied."

By contrast, family members of the baby were quietly relieved and grateful when interviewed a few minutes after the verdict.

"I finally got some closure," said Crystal Bell, Houston's mother. "I've been praying for four years: 'Keep me strong, keep me immensely strong to get through.'"

Her mother, Yvette Stuckey -- who often cared for little Houston while her daughter worked -- was also pleased with the verdict. "God is good," she said. "Justice has been done. ... We've been waiting four years for this day.

"We're sending out our prayers to Marcus' family," she added. "I just want them to know that."

"I'm extremely pleased that Bolden has been brought to justice," said Muskegon County Prosecutor Tony Tague. "A child paid with his life because of Bolden's jealous rage. We'll be seeking a significant prison sentence for his vicious taking of an innocent child's life."

Fourteenth Circuit Judge Timothy G. Hicks scheduled sentencing for 8:30 a.m. Sept. 26. Bolden could be sentenced to life or any term of years in prison, with eventual parole a possibility.

His defense attorney, Richard Terrell Taylor of Pontiac, had no complaints about the trial or the verdict. "I'm not overly disappointed," he said. "If he'd been acquitted, I'd be ecstatic. But given first-degree murder (as a possibility, this is preferable)... At least he has some chance of parole at some point.

"It's tragic, all the way around."

Bolden had recently begun dating Bell at the time of the baby's death. The injury happened the night of Jan. 30-31, 2004, in Bell's Merrill Avenue apartment, with only Bolden and Bell in the apartment at the time.

The case by Senior Assistant Prosecutor Dale J. Hilson at the five-day trial included medical testimony indicating Houston's head wound was no accident; Bell's testimony about her baby's final evening, leading up to her discovery of him lying on a bed at 2 a.m. Jan. 31 with a grossly swollen head and difficulty breathing; police testimony about Bolden's conflicting statements over the years; Bolden's written admission in March 2008 that he caused Houston's injury by throwing him down while angry at his crying, supposedly on a bed, causing the baby to bounce and strike a bedpost or the wall before falling on the floor.

Bell also testified that Bolden was angry that evening because she refused to get off the phone with the baby's father, a soldier then stationed elsewhere in the United States.

Jurors afterward said they had no doubt Bolden caused the injury, but they deliberated and debated over the legal elements of first-degree child abuse -- the underlying felony that would have been the basis of a first-degree felony murder conviction. Such a conviction would have meant life in prison without parole.

In the end, the jurors voted unanimously instead for the second-degree verdict.

possible quoteout:

"I finally got some closure." -- Crystal Bell, mother of 1-year-old murder victim Houston Curtis.

Thursday, August 28, 2008

Man pleads guilty to child sex charge

By DOMINIC ADAMS Argus-Press Staff Writer

Thursday, August 28, 2008 10:30 AM EDT

CORUNNA - An Owosso man admitted he took pictures of a 9-year-old girl's breasts while she was changing.

Sampson J. Irish, 26, said he snapped two photographs of the girl, who is the daughter of a family he was staying with at the time.

Irish faced seven felonies and was set for trial Tuesday in Shiawassee County Circuit Court.

Shiawassee County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Sara Edwards said she struck a deal with defense attorney Gordon Hoy about 8 p.m. Monday.

Edwards dropped six counts of possession of child sexually abusive material in exchange for Irish's guilty plea before Circuit Court Judge Gerald Lostracco Tuesday.

"I walked into the bedroom when she was changing and took the picture," Irish told the court.

Lostracco wanted specifics on where the incident took place.

"This is a room, her bedroom, where she had an expectation of privacy," Lostracco told Irish.

Irish said he deleted the pictures of the girl's unclad breasts later in the day.

The surveilling an unclothed person charge carries a two-year prison sentence and or \$2,000 in fines.

Irish also must undergo sex offender treatment and register as a sex offender.

"Basically, I had to cater because I wanted the sex offender registry," Edwards said. "I wanted him treated like a sex offender."

Edwards said Lostracco planned to combine the six charges of possession of child sexually abusive material charges into one charge.

Irish will be in court Sept. 26 for sentencing.

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New trial for Sharee Miller in notorious Internet-related murder case angers family of victim, Bruce Miller

by Ron Fonger | The Flint Journal
Thursday August 28, 2008, 11:34 PM



Sharee Miller's
prison mug shot



Sharee Miller
in 2000

Editor's note: This is an updated version of an [earlier post on this story](#).

GENESEE COUNTY, Michigan -- There could be a sequel on the horizon to one of the steamiest murder trials in recent county history -- one packed with sex, provocative e-mails and suicide.

A federal judge on Wednesday ordered a new trial for Sharee Miller, who was convicted of manipulating an Internet lover to kill her husband here in 1999 before the man killed himself.

Judge Victoria A. Roberts said in a 23-page opinion that Genesee Circuit

Judge Judith A. Fullerton erred in allowing the admission of a suicide note written by Jerry L. Cassaday, whom prosecutors said was enticed by Sharee Miller to kill her husband Bruce Miller. "She's going to have a new trial in Genesee County and the tainted evidence won't be allowed in." said David Nickola, who represented Sharee Miller in the case and contended that jurors should have never seen the suicide note because Cassaday was dead and could not be cross examined.

"We did not lose a fair fight. I know what was just and what wasn't just," Nickola said. "I knew at the time we were wronged."

Miller had maintained her innocence since being charged with the crimes, Nickola said.

Bruce Miller's brother, Charles, said his ex-sister-in-law doesn't deserve another chance.

"As far as I'm concerned she's guilty as hell," Charles Miller said. "Everything she's ever told us has been a lie."



August 29, 2008

New trial for Genesee Co. woman in Internet murder

Midday update

Associated Press

FLINT - A Genesee County woman who was convicted of enticing her Internet boyfriend to kill her husband is getting a new trial.

U.S. District Court Judge Victoria Roberts on Wednesday ordered a new trial for 36-year-old Sharee Miller of Mount Morris. Roberts ruled it was wrong to allow a suicide note by Jerry Cassaday into evidence.

Prosecutors say Sharee Miller persuaded Cassaday to kill her husband, Bruce. Cassaday later killed himself and left a note implicating Sharee Miller. She was sentenced to life in prison in the 1999 slaying.

Defense lawyer David Nickola said Miller's original trial wasn't fair because Cassaday could not be cross-examined.

Genesee County prosecutor David Leyton told The Flint Journal he would urge an appeal of the judge's order.

Walberg, Schauer outline health-care positions

Posted by [Fredricka Paul and Holly Klaft | Jackson Citizen Patriot](#)

August 29, 2008 11:00AM

With more Michigan residents struggling to afford health care, reforming the nation's system is becoming a focus for lawmakers.

It is a problem that the two 7th District congressional candidates — state Sen. Mark Schauer and U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg — say they aim to improve in different ways.

Walberg, R-Tipton, toured two Jackson County medical facilities Thursday hoping to inform area medical officials about his legislation that would provide families with health-care tax credits and create health savings accounts.

Accompanied by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Tevi Troy, Walberg strolled through Great Lakes Home, Health & Hospice and Allegiance Health's Heart Center and stressed the importance of having quality health care available in the Jackson community.

In 2007, 11 percent of the state's residents had no health insurance, according to a census report released this week. That is up from 10.4 percent in 2006.

As part of Walberg's plan, an individual could receive a tax credit of up to \$2,500 and a family of four could get a \$6,000 tax credit to make health care more affordable and create a health savings account.

Walberg and Schauer are vying for the House seat representing Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, Branch and Eaton counties and most of Calhoun and Washtenaw counties.

In a telephone interview, Schauer, D-Battle Creek, said he hopes to create a comprehensive, affordable health-care system that sends people to a primary care physician before the emergency room.

But first, he said he would meet with stakeholders such as health-care providers, patients and hospital staff to gain input on a system that would cure insurance ills.

"This is a large, complex reform and this has to be done with all of the players at the table," Schauer said. "It has to be done in the light of day so the public and stakeholders know exactly what's going on so we can build a bipartisan solution."

He said Walberg's plan will only complicate the problem and result in more families without insurance.

"It starts with having access," Schauer said. "Just by having insurance doesn't necessarily mean health care is affordable."

Walberg's campaign said his plan is meant to empower families, small businesses and patients.

It also includes medical facilities switching to paperless filing systems, making it easier to transfer data and create less room for errors, he said.

William Deary, president and CEO of Great Lakes, said his caregivers use a paperless filing system and are armed with laptop computers. The challenge for Deary is that other facilities are not paperless, but he hopes the government sets a standard for software for all health-care providers.

"We need to continue to look at the medical program and always continue looking for ways to improve quality, improve access and improve accountability of the providers," Deary said.

For Allegiance, the Heart Center will be the first of its centers to try a paperless charting and record system, said Georgia Fojtasek, president and CEO of Allegiance.

She said it is important to keep an open dialogue with lawmakers so they can work together to make the best decisions for people's health.